



WESTERN MEADOWLARK



JUNE POTLUCK DINNER, SLIDE SHOW AND INSTALLATION OF OFFICERS ENDS AUDUBON'S YEAR

June 21, 2006, Program for Wednesday at 6:30 PM

Come celebrate the end of our chapter's year,
the beginning of summer and the joy of nature at our June potluck dinner.
We will begin our evening of camaraderie at 6:30 p.m., an hour earlier than usual, on
Wednesday, June 16, at the San Bernardino County Museum.
SBVAS will supply a turkey and a ham as well as beverages.

Please bring a dish to share either a salad, vegetable, casserole, or dessert.

Please remember to bring your own table service.

Officers will be installed. This usually takes only a few minutes and then our members will
provide the program by bringing 10-15 of their favorite nature slides to share.

This is a great annual event and is fun for everyone.

Come enjoy good friends, food and what is certain to be a terrific evening. ♪

Northern Spotted Owl Recovery Team Selected

Release May 4, 2006

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service / Joan Jewett, (503) 231-6211

Members represent government and private interests

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) announced today it has convened a 12-member team to develop a recovery plan for the northern spotted owl, a threatened species protected under the Endangered Species Act.

Members of the team represent state and federal agencies and stakeholder groups and have scientific and technical expertise in forest management issues and northern spotted owl biology. They are tasked with developing a draft recovery plan that will be available for public review by November 2006 and a final plan by November 2007.

Dave Allen, Director of the Service's Pacific Region, recently formally notified recovery team members of their appointment.

"I greatly appreciate the team members' willingness to assist the Service on this very important assignment," Regional Director Allen said. "It is my desire that this recovery plan be developed in the most collaborative way possible through a team with a diverse array of scientific and technical expertise."

Dave Wesley, the Pacific Region's Deputy Director, will serve

(Continued on page 6)

Avian Flu Not a Danger for

North American Bird Watchers

Because of recent media attention about avian flu, the Cornell Lab of Ornithology has received numerous inquiries from people who are worried about the possible danger of avian flu in the United States. Currently, avian flu is not a danger for people who watch or feed birds in North America.

Highly pathogenic H5N1 appears to have mostly spread in Asia through unregulated movement, trade and handling of infected poultry.

Since January 2004, the known human cases of avian flu have all occurred in Southeast Asia. Almost all of these infections were contracted by people who handle chickens. Migratory waterfowl and shorebirds can carry avian flu; infected birds have been found in Mongolia, Kazakhstan and Russia.

However, according to Alfonso Torres of Cornell's College of Veterinary Medicine, "When experts look at the maps of the areas affected by avian influenza in Asia and they look at the flying pathways of migratory waterfowl, there is not an overlap. Waterfowl are not the culprit for what is happening in Asia." (see Cornell Helps Monitor Path of Avian Flu Virus)

(Cornell's Lab...Continued on page 6)

DFG Asks California Residents to Keep Bird Feeders Clean and Disease-Free

The California Department of Fish and Game (DFG) is encouraging California residents to take additional steps this spring to keep bird feeders clean. An outbreak of mycoplasmosis, a disease affecting finches, but not humans, has been discovered in the Walnut Creek area.

Weekly cleaning of bird feeders must be done to minimize the risk of spreading the disease among finches and other birds, said Dr. Pam Swift, a DFG wildlife veterinarian.

Mycoplasmosis is a bacteria-like disease that has been discovered for the first time in wild finches in California. The disease has been present in wild birds in the eastern US



Photo by Raymond Belhumeur, Saint-Hubert, Quebec

Mycoplasmosis is not related to Avian Influenza or West Nile Virus.

since the mid-1990s. Dr. Nancy Anderson, D.V.M. of the Lindsay Wildlife Museum in Walnut Creek first noticed eye infections in house finches brought to the Museum. Subsequent testing indicated that the cause was mycoplasmosis, and it was confirmed by the California Animal Health and Food Safety Laboratory out of U.C. Davis.

Affected birds develop an eye infection that may lead to blindness and breathing difficulties. Birds may then rub their heads on branches and feeders, increasing the risk of spreading the disease. The types of feeders that force birds to stick their heads inside are especially problematic because the birds eyes come into direct contact with the sides of the tubes. Other species of birds may be also affected by this disease.

To help control the disease, DFG biologists are urging residents to begin aggressively cleaning bird feeders weekly by using a 10 percent solution of household bleach in water. The feeders should be completely dried before adding new food. Other suggestions include:

Clean up old food around feeders on a regular basis.

Spread small amounts of seed over a large area in the sun, instead of using bird boxes or feeders. Also, vary the location of seeds to avoid encouraging a concentration of birds at one site.

Replace wooden bird feeders with plastic or metal. Wood harbors disease organisms and cannot be sanitized as effectively.

Use gloves when handling dead birds and bird feeders and wash hands with anti-bacterial soap when finished.

Residents should take these added steps to ensure feeder care at least through the end of May.

Those who enjoy bird feeding should continue the practice of regular bird feeder cleaning, up to a weekly interval, outside of this outbreak.

A low level of disease is common among wild bird popula-

Survey of Burrowing Owls

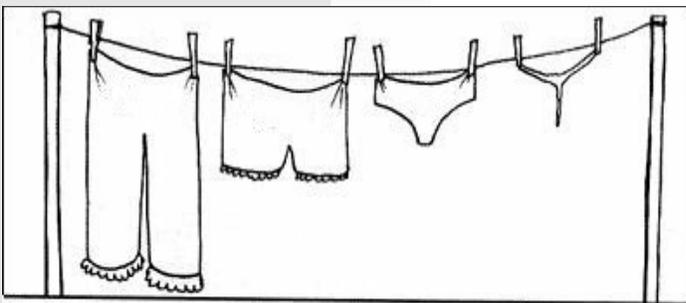
As many of you have heard the Institute for Bird Populations (IBP) is beginning a 2-year effort to survey Burrowing Owls throughout the state. Complete details and background information can be found on their website at:

<http://www.birdpop.org/burrowing.htm>

I am going to be coordinating efforts in Los Angeles County and co-coordinating efforts in San Bernardino and Riverside Counties. We are going to need volunteer surveyors to cover suitable habitat in 5 km x 5 km blocks selected by the IBP as well as check locations of historic populations between May 1 and July 1, 2006 & 2007. Unfortunately, few owls remain in the coastal areas, so most of the survey effort in Los Angeles County is going to be in the Antelope Valley and high desert. If you are interested, please contact me and I will provide you with more information. Please send me your name, address, phone, e-mail, and regions that you are most/least interested in surveying.

Additionally, I would like to request that you submit any historic and current sightings that you have made of burrowing owls in these counties that have not already been submitted to

(Survey...Continued on page 7)



1920 1950 1980 2005

Proof of Global Warming

tions. Weekly cleaning of bird feeders has been suggested during other bird disease outbreaks in past years.

Mycoplasmosis is not related to Avian Influenza or West Nile Virus. It has not been known to spread to humans. However, good hygiene should always be practiced when cleaning bird feeders and areas where birds congregate.

Wild species are not the only birds susceptible to mycoplasmosis. In domestic poultry there are many strains of mycoplasma that can result in respiratory disease, reproductive problems and joint infections. Poultry breeders control mycoplasma infections through a program managed by the National Poultry Improvement Plan (NPIP).

Vaccines developed for poultry are available for some types of mycoplasma. Antibiotics may be used, but birds may continue to carry and shed the organism. Preventing contact with wild birds is the best strategy to prevent mycoplasmosis in poultry.

Steve Loe - Forest Biologist; San Bernardino National Forest
Phone 909-382-2724

E-mail: sloe@fs.fed.us or Steve Loe@fs.fed.us

Dear Friends of the Arctic, with the House of Representatives not in session this week (April, 2006) and thus a momentary respite before the next round of DC action to fight for protection of the coastal plain of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, we can contemplate some longer-term proactive events to keep the Arctic Refuge and its fragile habitats in the public eye. Many of you know, or know of Canadian activist Ken Madsen, who has dedicated himself for years to protecting the Refuge from drilling; he developed a striking multi-media program called the "Caribou Commons" slide show, prepared a beautiful Arctic calendar last year, and did a nationwide biking and hike tour in 2003, ending in Washington DC.

hot bird-viewing locales could be organized

Ken is now planning another major YEARLONG event, from June 2007 until June 2008, which he calls the "Big Year Birding" trip, to be done together with his wife Wendy and son Malcolm, now 12. Their idea is to follow as much as possible the paths of birds that nest in summer in the Arctic Refuge and in winter go to many parts of the U.S. To the Pacific flyway, for example. And they plan to do this without using any fossil fuel for transportation! (A lot of it will be biking.) Ken is starting now to get initial publicity for this saga, and trying to meet with groups who have an interest in birds and who may even join him in the course of his travels on some local birding outings.

The Alaska Task Force is working with Ken Madsen on getting people interested in this visionary journey, and beginning to identify which Sierra Club activists are birders and have some knowledge of where some good local events around flyways or other hot bird-viewing locales could be organized. And how folks may be able to help, through planning and publicizing associated local events, or otherwise getting the word out. There will be a website so people can keep track of Ken's activities and add their own observations.

Unfortunately, I myself am no birder; I don't have good ideas on where Arctic-migrating birds are to be found, or when, or how to seek out birders amongst us who would like to be involved in this mega-project.

I invite any of you to help out with ideas, suggestions, or -- ?

Let me hear from you. I will start a list of folks who'd like to be a part of this.

THANKS! Vicky

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*"No one can do everything
but everyone can do something" ♣*

Inland Plant Guide

By JENNIFER BOWLES The Press-Enterprise

So far, \$12,000 has been raised to offset publishing costs for the first field guide of plants that grow along the Santa Ana River. The nonprofit publishing company is hoping to raise another \$8,000:

Send tax-deductible donations to:
Santa Ana River Flora, c/o Heyday Institute,
P.O. Box 9145, Berkeley, CA 94709.

For more information: send an e-mail to oscarclarke@gmail.com. Very little escapes Oscar Clarke's discerning eye. Walking on a nature trail in Rubidoux, he can't take more than a couple of steps without noticing a unique herb hugging the ground that most would dismiss as a weed; catching a glimpse of a still cricket, even though it's camouflaged by the ground; or examining the leaf of a towering willow, so he can tell you what kind it is. He'll even inspect dried-up dung and wonder what critter passed by earlier. If no answer comes to mind, then he'll look for tracks to see if it was a mountain lion, coyote or wild pig. "The book says plants, but that's just an excuse to see other things," said the affable Clarke, as he walked a path at the Louis Robidoux Nature Center, across the Santa Ana River from Riverside.

By book, Clarke means the first field guide of trees, flowers and other plants -- rare, native and exotic -- that grow along the river's main artery and its major feeder creeks in San Bernardino, Riverside and Orange counties. The Colton-born Clarke, now 86 and retired as UC Riverside's herbarium curator, is spending his twilight years ambling along Inland waterways, looking for specimens to document in his book. He's often accompanied by UC Riverside entomologist Greg Ballmer, armed with clippers and plastic bags to collect plant specimens. Kurt Miller / The Press-Enterprise Oscar Clarke is working on a field guide of trees, flowers and other plants that grow along Santa Ana River's main artery. Walking over a small bridge at the nature center, Ballmer snipped off a few stringy flowers from a box elder tree hanging over the creek, so they can be used in the book. "We have the seeds and leaves, but not the flower," said Ballmer, 60. Geared toward the everyday person, Clarke hopes "The Flora of the Santa Ana River" will foster an interest in the Inland area's natural world -- much like the goal of Saturday's annual Earth Day celebration to raise awareness of the environment -- when it is published next spring by Berkeley-based Heyday Institute, a nonprofit organization. "I'm hoping it will get them to ... go out and look at the plants, feel them, smell them, even take a taste of them, become aware of all the aspects," Clarke said. Never mind the poison hemlock that grows at the nature center. But the stinging nettle? Clarke says to go for it in the spring. Related Video: Take a nature walk with Inland plant expert Oscar Clarke "If you put it between your fingers it stings," Clarke said, holding his fingers between the nettle's pointy leaves. "But it's very good to eat; it's high in protein." And cattails that Clarke plucked from the river's edge tasted like cucumbers. While Clarke's focus for the book began several years ago with plants along the river's edge, the book's scope quickly expanded to its major tributaries -- San Timoteo Creek, Lytle Creek, Cajon Creek, the San

(Oscar...Continued on page 5)

Sage sparrow *Amphispiza belli*

Identification Tips:

- Length: 5 inches
- Dark, conical bill
- White supraloral spot
- Broken eye ring
- White throat with black whisker
- Gray crown, back and wings
- Dark streaks on back (variable)
- White underparts with blurry streaks on flanks and dark spot on breast
- Long, dark tail with small amount of white on outer tail feathers
- Birds from California have darker upperparts
- Sexes similar
- Juvenile (Spring to Fall) much browner, streaked below with faint adult face pattern
- (We saw several nesting pairs on the Breakfast Walk...)



Photo courtesy of USGS



Photo courtesy of Bill Myers

Gene and Dori's Pancake Breakfast & Tom Benson's Cal State San Bernardino Birdwalk, May 13, 2006

**WRIGHTWOOD
& SAN GABRIEL MOUNTAINS**

Saturday, June 10, 7:00 a.m.
Leader: Gene Cardiff (909) 875-5358

The San Gabriel Mountains trip will start at the California Department of Forestry Mormon Rocks Station on Highway 138 at 7:00 a.m. Take I-15 north from San Bernardino or south from the Victor Valley and turn toward Palmdale on Highway 138. The CDF Station is located 1.5 miles up Hwy 138 on the left side of the road, opposite the large sandstone formation called the Mormon Rocks. (There are no restrooms at the CDF Station, use the restrooms at the gas stations near the off ramp.) After birding that area for 30-45 minutes, we will proceed up Lone Pine Canyon Rd into Wrightwood. We will enjoy a snack at the Twin Lakes Club and then will proceed up Highway 2 to the Arch Picnic Grounds at Big Pines and to the Table Mountain Campground amphitheater. We will have lunch at Table Mountain. After lunch, we will proceed to Valyermo where we will bird the Paradise Springs area and St. Andrew's Priory. If the cherries are ripe, we will stop to pick fresh cherries. (Maybe!)

Bring a lunch, liquids and a good pair of shoes. We will look for mountain birds such as the white-headed woodpecker, Clark's nutcracker, red crossbill, green-tailed towhee, Townsend's solitaire, and black-chinned sparrows.

Please don't forget : You will need an Adventure Pass (we will stop at the ranger station ♪

**OWLING FIELD TRIP
TO THE
SAN BERNARDINO MOUNTAINS**

Saturday, June 17th 5:00 pm
Leader: Dave Goodward

We will meet at Heart Bar State Park on Highway 38 at 5:00 PM. After an hour or so of leisurely evening birding, we will have a picnic dinner (bring your own!) and at dusk, car-pool to the Fish Creek Trailhead. We should see Poorwills along the very bumpy road to Fish Creek. After dark, we will look for Flammulated Owls, seen there last year, and have a chance for Saw-whet as well.

After returning to Heart Bar, anyone interested in more owling can join us as we look for Spotted Owls and Western Screech-owls in the vicinity of Angeles Oaks.

Highway 38 begins at Interstate 10 in Redlands. Follow 38 past Barton Flats, and about 2 miles past South Fork Campground. Look for the turn on the right-hand side of the road, and drive a short distance to the small parking lot on the right just before the entrance to the park.

If you come late and miss us, follow Forest Service Road 1N05 about 7 miles to the trailhead, just past Mission Springs. Do not stop at the first Fish Creek trail, which is only about 2 miles from Heart Bar, and do not turn toward Coon Creek Jump-off.

Please be aware that most owl species took a hit from the recent drought, and have been difficult to find in the San Bernardino Mountains for the last few years.

*Please dress warmly,
and be prepared to stay quiet as we
try to call in the owls.
See you there! ♪*

PALM SPRINGS TRAM EXPEDITION

Saturday, July 15, 8AM

Leader: Tim Krantz (909)794-5819

Join us on this new field trip offering for a birding adventure up the Palm Springs Aerial Tram! The abrupt ascent scales Mt. San Jacinto from its base at 2,600 feet to the tramway summit at 8,500 feet in just 15 minutes—from the Sonoran Desert to Boreal forest, representing the ecological equivalent of traveling 40° in Latitude in just a few kilometers as the Clark's nutcracker flies!

We will meet at the Lower Parking Lot looking for birds of the desert and riparian woodlands, before boarding the revolving tram cars, offering spectacular 360° views. From the top, we will take a leisurely 1.5mi hike to Hidden Lake, a montane vernal pool, dry in recent years, but it will be full this year. We'll look for white-headed woodpeckers, Williamson sapsuckers, yellow warblers, and other mountain inhabitants; and on hands and knees, search for the endemic Hidden Lake blue curls known only from this location.

We will have lunch at the lake, before returning to the tram. There are facilities at the Tram Station.

Group rates for the Tram are \$18.70 for adults, and \$11.65 for children ages 3-12. Fares will be collected by the leader and paid as a lump sum.

For more information on the Palm Springs Tram, weather conditions, Etc., check out their web site at: <http://www.palmsprings.com/active/Tramway.tml>.

(Oscar...Continued from page 3)

Jacinto River, Mystic Lake and Temescal Creek -- and valley areas where unique plants grow in alkaline soil. "You can't leave those out; they're very special," he said. The book covers plants from the 3,500-foot elevation down to sea level at the Pacific Ocean, leaving out the river's upper-most watershed in the mountains from Big Bear Lake to Idyllwild. Still, there will be about 1,500 plants documented in the 350- to 400-page book. Clarke is getting a lot of help for his book from Ballmer and Danielle Svehla, a former engineer and ecology student. "This book," said Ballmer, "is really an opportunity to get Oscar's experience and wisdom down for posterity." Ballmer, as a UC Riverside student in 1964, met Clarke when he was a teacher's assistant in a field botany course. Clarke was always the go-to guy for plant information and still is one of the Inland region's top authorities, Ballmer said. Once relying on line drawings of plants for their book, Clarke and Ballmer now use a computer scanner to take highly detailed and almost three-dimensional images of the plants. "When I learned about scanners from Danielle, I jumped in full throttle," Clarke said. Working from Clarke's home office, Ballmer shows how he uses an open frame on top of the scanner to prevent the lid from crushing the plant as its image is captured. Not happy with specks of dirt on a flower the size of a pinhead that show up on the computer image, Ballmer gingerly brushes it off with a paintbrush before trying it again on the scanner. Katie Barrows, president of the Riverside-San Bernardino chapter of the California Native Plant Society, said anticipation is building

SALTON SEA/WOOD STORK FIELD TRIP (INSANE JAUNT)

Sunday, August 27, 5:30 AM

Leader: John Green (951) 686-2956
or e-mail bewickwren@earthlink.net

How would you like to see birds like Wood Stork, Laughing Gull, Yellow-footed Gull, Gull-billed Tern, Ruddy Ground-dove, Burrowing Owl, and Bronzed Cowbird?

All those and more may be yours at the mere price of 110 degree average daily highs in the pungent glory and spectacle that is the Salton Sea in summertime. With luck, perhaps something like an Anhinga, Tricolored Heron, or Magnificent Frigatebird will appear (or is it just the heat?).

*****DO NOT*** come on the trip without:**

- ▶ LOTS OF WATER,
- ▶ a large ice chest,
- ▶ lots of ice, lunch, snacks, a hat,
- ▶ a working air conditioner, and
- ▶ a full tank of gas (top off in Indio).

Meeting place will be at the Wister Unit of the Imperial Wildlife Area. Going south on Highway 111 along the east shore of the Sea, you will turn right at Davis Road, which is signed for the Wister Unit. Proceed to the parking lot on your left. If you reach the town of Niland on Highway 111, you have gone 5 miles too far.

We'll meet at 5:30 AM, just before sunrise, to beat as much of the heat as we can. We'll head out and bird until we've had enough. Our route will be determined by where the Wood Storks are, and where other birds of interest are being seen. Motels are available in Calipatria, Brawley, and Indio for those wishing to spend Saturday night in the area. ♪

for the book and its unique way of presenting images.

"Everyone is always excited about a new plant book, especially a book from Oscar," said Barrows, of La Quinta. "He has just a huge amount of knowledge." Clarke began working with the natural world in his early years in Colton, collecting bird eggs for ornithologist Wilson Hanna. He began work at UCR when it was known as the Citrus Experiment Station in 1941, washing dishes. After a stint in the Army during World War II, he returned to the Citrus Experiment Station and worked in nematology and plant pathology. In 1966, the university asked him to establish the herbarium. "They wanted to open it in a hurry and at half price, so they took a chance on me," he said. Having retired in 1979, Clarke has traveled the world with his wife Marsia, often camping in Australia, Africa, South America and Europe for months at a time. Now, he is donating his time to create the comprehensive field guide. He and Ballmer have devoted untold hours to the labor of love. "That keeps the price down," Clarke said, with a smile.

To reach Jennifer Bowles at (951) 368-9548 or jbowles@PE.com & look for her column in Riverside's Press Enterprise

We all have been honored to have had Oscar as a long time member and a very special friend of SBVAS.

♪

(Continued from page 1)

as the leader of the recovery team. Other members of the recovery team are:

- Tim Cullinan, Director of Science and Bird Conservation, National Audubon Society, Washington State Office, Olympia, Washington
- Lowell Diller, Senior Biologist, Green Diamond Resource Company, Korbel, California
- Scott Gremel, Wildlife Biologist, Olympic National Park, Washington
- Mike Haske, Chief of Forest Resources and Special Status Species, Bureau of Land Management, Oregon and Washington
- Cal Joyner, Natural Resources Director, U.S. Forest Service, Pacific Northwest Region, Portland, Oregon
- John Mankowski, Executive Policy Advisor for Natural Resources, Washington Governor's Office, Olympia, Washington
- Ed Murphy, Manager, Resource Inventory Systems, Sierra Pacific Industries, Redding, California
- Barry Noon, Professor, Department of Fishery and Wildlife Biology, Colorado State University, and Defenders of Wildlife Board of Directors member, Fort Collins, Colorado
- Jim Paul, Private and Community Forests Policy Unit Manager, Oregon Department of Forestry, Salem, Oregon
- John Siperek, Wildlife Program Manager, Northern California Coast Region, California Department of Fish and Game
- Dave Wooten, Regional Biologist, Sacramento Pacific Region, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Sacramento, California

Paul Phifer, a member of the Pacific Regional Office's Ecological Service's staff, will be the project manager to coordinate the overall process. An interagency staff team will support the recovery team.

The recovery team will begin meeting in May and is tasked with producing a plan that identifies goals, criteria and management actions for the survival and recovery of the northern spotted owl. During development of the plan, the team is expected to conduct scientific workshops and public meetings. The recovery plan will be peer-reviewed before being finalized.

The team will work with existing materials to develop the recovery plan. Examples of these materials include results of the Service's November 2004 Northern Spotted Owl 5-year review and the Northwest Forest Plan 10-year report titled "Status of Trends of Northern Spotted Owl Populations and Habitat." The availability of these recent comprehensive scientific reviews is expected to allow the completion of this recovery plan in an expedited manner.

The northern spotted owl was listed as threatened in 1990 and its critical habitat was designated in 1992. The Northwest Forest Plan was developed in 1994 and has been the cornerstone for conserving the northern spotted owl on 24.4 million acres of federal land in Oregon, Washington and California.

The recovery plan will address what is needed to recover

(Cornell's Lab...Continued from page 1)

Why are people worried? One concern is that this particular virus could mutate and become more contagious, possibly spreading from person to person. Another concern is that the flu could be imported into this country through infected poultry. Public health officials are already working to ensure that this doesn't happen.

*The United States Fish and Wildlife Service recently launched a web site entitled **Avian Influenza in Wild Birds--Sources of Information**. This educational document can be viewed at <http://migratorybirds.fws.gov>.*

Migratory birds are unlikely to infect humans or poultry in U.S. with deadly avian flu, say Cornell bird experts
By Krishna Ramanujan
April 26, 2006

For the virulent H5N1 strain of avian flu to establish itself on U.S. soil via wild birds, a string of events must come together, none of which can be predicted, according to experts at Cornell's Lab of Ornithology.

They are part of a new avian influenza task force at the lab, intent on understanding, tracking and relaying accurate information to the public about avian influenzas. While infection by the H5N1 strain of flu is rare in humans, it quickly kills half of those infected. In poultry, the highly pathogenic virus can be extremely deadly, killing more than 90 percent of infected birds within 48 hours. But many wild birds, especially certain waterfowl, can carry the deadly virus in their intes-

(Cornell's Lab...Continued on page 7)

the species throughout its range, including federal and non-federal land, and will set specific recovery criteria.

Updates on the recovery plan development and notice of public meetings and opportunities for comment will be available at <http://www.fws.gov/pacific/ecoservices/endangered/recovery/NSORecoveryPlanning.htm>

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is the principal Federal agency responsible for conserving, protecting and enhancing fish, wildlife and plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. The Service manages the 95-million-acre National Wildlife Refuge System, which encompasses 545 national wildlife refuges, thousands of small wetlands and other special management areas. It also operates 69 national fish hatcheries, 64 fishery resources offices and 81 ecological services field stations. The agency enforces federal wildlife laws, administers the Endangered Species Act, manages migratory bird populations, restores nationally significant fisheries, conserves and restores wildlife habitat such as wetlands, and helps foreign and Native American tribal governments with their conservation efforts. It also oversees the Federal Assistance program, which distributes hundreds of millions of dollars in excise taxes on fishing and hunting equipment to state fish and wildlife agencies.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service ♣

(Cornell's Lab...Continued from page 6)

tines with few symptoms.

Experts believe wild birds from Asia -- where the disease is widespread among free-flying birds and where the majority of the more than 100 human deaths globally have occurred -- will bring the highly pathogenic H5N1 to the United States, possibly this year. Still, nobody knows which species of birds are capable of flying thousands of miles across the ocean after contracting the disease. Right now, a government task force has its eye on Alaska, where about 30 species of migratory birds, including Arctic warblers and yellow wagtails, will breed this spring after wintering in Asia. The government's task force plans to sample thousands of birds for H5N1 as part of an early detection program.

It is highly unlikely, lab experts say, that a bird would fly from Asia to Alaska and then to the lower 48 states. The fear, however, is that later this summer an infected bird from Asia could mingle with birds from the lower 48 states and Central and South America that also breed in Alaska, like snow geese, common eiders and tundra swans. If that were to occur, a bird could return to the lower 48 states with the deadly virus and hypothetically infect other birds.

But even if the virus did arrive, the chance of wild birds infecting people (who rarely contract the disease in its present form) or poultry (protected by very stringent industry standards and lack of contact with wild birds) is slim.

"If avian flu were to show up in U.S. poultry, migratory birds are probably the least likely source of infection," said Ken Rosenberg, director of conservation science at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology.

"It's a whole lot easier to see someone smuggling an infected gamecock or parrot into the U.S. through Mexico or Canada," added Kevin McGowan, a research associate at the lab, noting that all birds that are sold are regularly exposed to other birds from all over the world in both illegal and legal bird markets. The Cornell ornithologists, however, point out that bird migration routes are "leaky" -- they are broad pathways rather than narrow streets, and birds regularly get lost. Birds from Asia that breed in Alaska could be found elsewhere, such as along the U.S. Pacific coast. But even if an infected bird landed in the lower 48 states, the poultry industry is probably safe.

"At present there are still no thoroughly documented records of wild birds infecting domestic poultry or humans anywhere," said McGowan.

Highly pathogenic H5N1 appears to have mostly spread in Asia through unregulated movement, trade and handling of infected poultry.

While the researchers are less concerned about avian flu impacting humans or domestic poultry, they point out that the virulence of the highly pathogenic H5N1 creates a real danger to threatened or endangered bird species. Whooping cranes and such species related to poultry as prairie chickens, grouse and quail are all in trouble and could be some of the most susceptible species to the highly pathogenic avian flu. 🐦

"If avian flu were to show up in U.S. poultry, migratory birds are probably the least likely source of infection,"

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RARE BIRD ALERT: Kirk and Linda Stitt

at secalrba@earthlink.net or call (909) 793-5599 option 3 to leave a report on the RBA phone machine. 🐦

FIELDTRIP CHECKLIST

- ☉ Comfortable shoes or hiking boots,
- ☉ Hat, jacket, warm clothing,
- ☉ Sunscreen, and insect repellent,
- ☉ A Road Map, Full fuel tank,
- ☉ Some drinking water, Snacks and a lunch;
- ☉ Binoculars / Scope and your field guide 🐦

(Survey...Continued from page 2)

the CNDDDB database or IBP. You can either send them to me or directly to the project coordinator Bob Wilkerson at (bwilkerson@birdpop.org) Thank you very much for your help!

Please feel free to forward this to anyone else you know who might be interested in participating, but please avoid posting to listservs (LACoBird & Calbirds) where it has already been posted.

Best wishes, Tom

Thomas Ryan, Foothill Associates

24961 The Old Road, Suite 102

Stevenson Ranch, CA 91381

(661) 284-3018 / Tom.Ryan@foothill.com 🐦

Bearpaw Ranch is SBVAS's 70 acre nature sanctuary, operated by the San Bernardino Audubon Society and may be visited 7 days a week from dawn 'til dusk by members of Audubon and their guests. Bearpaw Ranch is nestled on the north slope of scenic Mill Creek Canyon at 4,500 feet elevation, surrounded by the towering peaks of the San Bernardino National Forest. To reach Bearpaw Ranch, take Highway 38 to the Forest Falls turnoff. Go only a few car lengths on Valley of the Falls Dr. and look for our small wooden sign on the right. We have a new paved road, the entry is easy for almost all normal passenger cars. There is a electronically operated entry gate. Members who wish to visit the Sanctuary should call ahead for the security code.

Access to the code may be had by calling—
Bearpaw at (909) 794-0509.

Bearpaw Sanctuary, 38801 Valley of the Falls Drive
P.O. Box 88; Forest Falls, CA 92339



San Bernardino County Museum
2024 Orange Tree Lane, Redlands
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Orange Tree Lane—turn right.
The museum will be on your left...

All meetings in
the San Bernardino County
Museum
2024 Orange Tree Lane, Red-
lands
Board Meetings are the 1st



SBVAS Calendar

June 7 7:00 BOARD MEETING
June 21..... 6:30 GENERAL MEETING
July 5..... 7:00 BOARD MEETING
Aug 2..... 7:00 BOARD MEETING
Aug 7:00 FIELDTRIP MEETING

If you have questions please call or go on line to check current detail. www.sbvass.org Thanks

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